

Sent:
To:
Subject:

20 October 2025 05:08
crawleyobserver@jpimedia.co.uk; ct.news@jpimedia.co.uk

"WE HAVE A MORAL RESPONSIBILITY TO TAKE ACTION" WITHIN THIS ANCIENT PARISH OF IFIELD

Categories: Comments Received

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/oct/19/developers-encroach-on-2000-year-old-devon-wetland-citing-blockages-to-labours-housing-plans>

On Sunday, October 19, 2025, 3:55 PM, [REDACTED] wrote:

Dear Editor

We, the parish community, have a moral responsibility to take action against the monstrous abuse of power by this Government and its reckless, irresponsible master-developer Homes England ['Ecological emergency' unofficially declared within the ancient parish of Ifield', Crawley Observer-Sussex World, Oct 17].

Author and journalist George Monbiot writes ['Wage war on nature to build new homes: that's Labour's offer, but it's a con trick', Guardian, Oct 16]:

'The government's new planning bill is tearing down environmental protections to benefit developers. The nation of nature lovers won't stand for it...

'Last week ['Labour targeting nature: the problem isn't snails, but a broken housing model', Oct 12], the Guardian revealed that the chancellor, Rachel Reeves, boasted to corporate executives

that she has “unblocked” a large housing development in [North] Sussex being held up by “some snails...a protected species or something...microscopic snail that you cannot even see” [like air - Ed]...

‘This brings us to another principle: as the war on nature proceeds, ministers sound ever more like Donald Trump. The very rare little whirlpool ramshorn snail, by no means microscopic, is an indicator of fresh water not affected by sewage pollution: now a scarce habitat in England.

‘Reeves went on to say: “We’ve got a good relationship with the developer and he brought it to our attention”. What is this relationship?...Like Trump, they don’t even disguise their loyalties. Reeves boasted that she had hatched the plan to rip down our nature protections over a “smoked salmon and scrambled eggs breakfast” with corporate lobbyists...

‘The planning and infrastructure bill being rammed through parliament is a full-spectrum assault on nature protection, the worst in England in living memory. It was rushed out, without consultation or evidence, under an “urgent measures” procedure, a device usually reserved for a defence or public health emergency. In other words, the government has used another Trumpian gambit to get its way: emergency powers.

The bill will enable developers to bulldoze precious wild places, as long as they pay into a fund that may create alternative habitats or green spaces somewhere else.

Irreplaceable ecosystems will be sold for cash. This outrageous measure is even worse than it first appears: a closer reading of the bill shows that the money could be diverted into any form of government spending, from prisons to debt repayments.

Alternatively, the payments could be used by Natural England to fund its administration and operations.

You don't need to be clairvoyant to see how that develops: as its funding is steadily privatised, the regulator comes to depend on developers for survival.

'And it gets worse still. Clause 90 enables governments to use "Henry VIII powers" to change any act or law to meet the objectives of the bill without full parliamentary debate: another "emergency" measure that could threaten any remaining protections.

'So why isn't the country in uproar?

'But that's still not the end of it. Because the rushed bill is such an ill-considered mess, the government is proposing another one. If it goes ahead, it will sweep away our rights under the Aarhus convention to challenge destructive developments...

'England urgently needs new homes. But we also need to defend and enhance our remaining ecosystems, and ensure everyone has access to green spaces, crucial to our physical and mental health. That's what the planning system is for: to reconcile the need for development with other public needs.

But if you listen only to “leading CEOs”, you ensure the country becomes hospitable to capital - but inhospitable to wildlife and people...

‘We are a nation of nature lovers. If and when the conservation groups at last wake up, we will defend our green spaces and treasured species...as staunchly as we defend the right of everyone to be well housed.

‘The government is forcing us to choose. But no such choice is necessary’

George Monbiot calls what is happening “a con trick”.

David Hathaway has a similar, more nuanced local view:
“The site is not viable without chicanery”.

Don’t let it happen - it depends on us.

An unofficial ‘Ecological Emergency’ has been declared in the hope it will become ‘official’. An application for the ancient Parish to be designated a ‘National Landscape’ (formerly an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty-AONB) has also been made. Further action will be taken next year such as The Parish Exhibition 2026’.

If you have not already done so, write to Horsham District Council opposing Homes England’s speculative West of Ifield planning application [DC/25/1312].

If we do nothing,
nothing will happen.
If we do something,

something may happen. And that something - however small - might change everything.

The Battle for the Soul of Ifield continues. Don't give up.

Yours sincerely

The Ifield Society

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Ancient Parish of Ifield
[boundary outline in black] -
showing Willoughby Fields Local
Nature Reserve LNR, Ifield Brook
Meadows Local Green Space
LGS, Ifield Millpond SNCI and
Ifield Golf Club [across the middle
of the picture]

- Proposed Ifield Country Park
- Map from 'Ifield & Beyond - A Taste of the Sussex Countryside'
- Brochure funded by Crawley Borough Council, Horsham

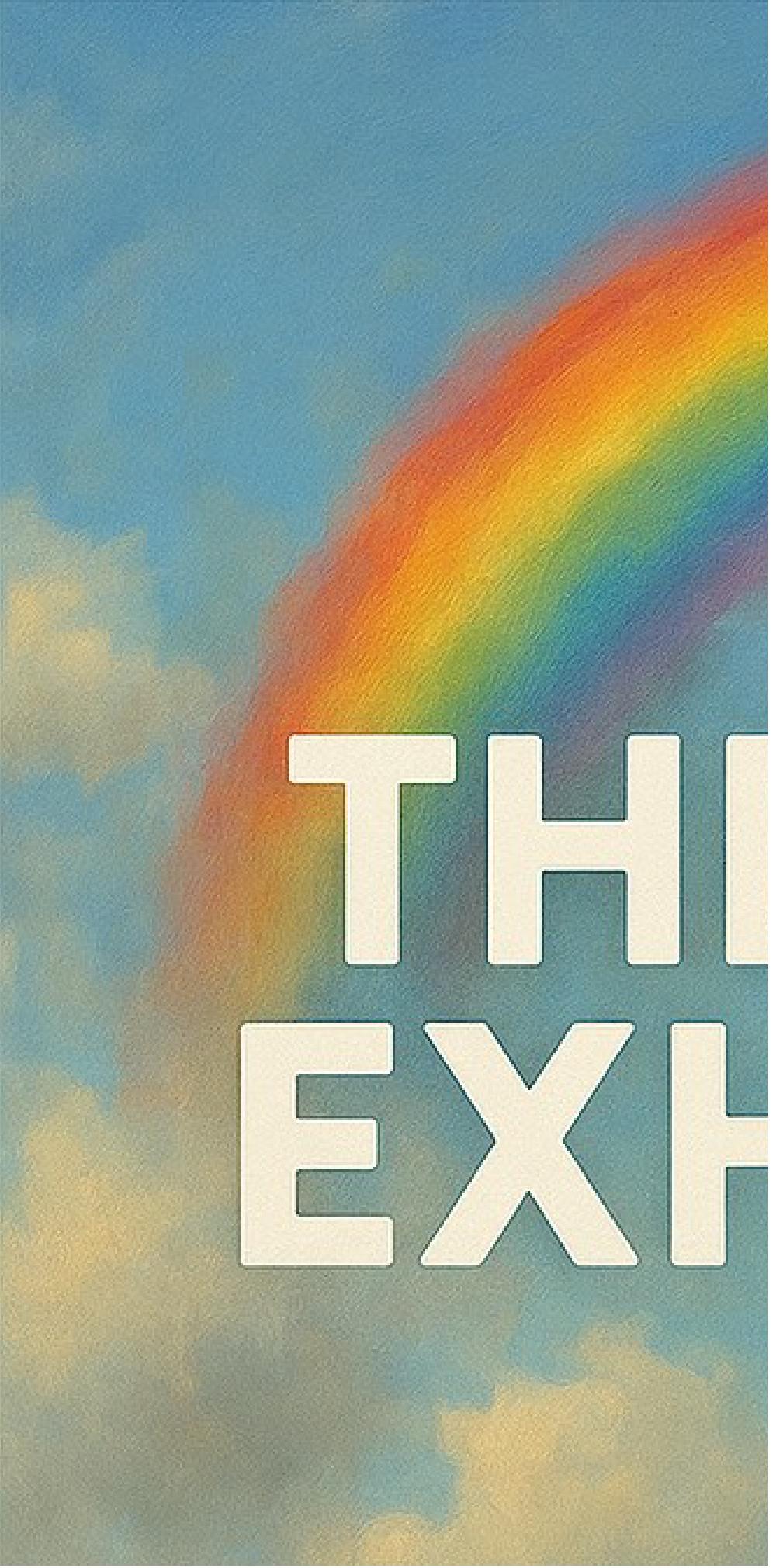
District Council and West Sussex
County Council.

Lesser Whirlpool Ramshorn Snail

‘The Nightmare Vision’

‘Ecological Emergency’
unofficially declared

Kingfisher at Ifield Millpond [Photo
by Dale Baldwin]



THE
EXH



‘A Village Scene’





Ancient Parish [West of Ifield - North Sussex]

